A

True and perfect

Discourse of the practises and Treasons of Marshall

BIRON:

Together with the particulars of his Arraignment and Execution.

Faithfully translated out of the French.

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A PETITION DELIVERED to the King by *Sieur de la Force*, assisted with the *Sieurs de Sant Blancard, Count de Rousy, Chausteau neuf, Themines, Salignac, S. Angel*, kinsmen and Alies of the Duke *Biron*, beseeching the King to saue the life of the saide Duke: his Maiestie being at *S. Maur des Fosses* in a gallerie of the Castle, accompanied with the Prince of *Conde*, the Constable *de la Rochepot*, and other Lords, the xvii. of July 1602. all the said *Sieurs* casting themselues at the feete of his Maiestie, the King taking off his hat, willed them to rise: *Sr. de la Force* spake thus.

Sir, I haue alwayes seene that your Maiestie hath taken in good part my most humble requestes: and vpon that encouragement we are come to caste our selues at your feet, attended with the prayers of more then an hundred thousand men, your most humble

and moſt faithfull ſeruants, to implore your mercie, and not to aſke iuſtice, for theſe poore miſerable men. God would that he ſhould pardon thoſe that offend his, as wee deſire to be pardoned our ſelues. Men haue not ſet your crowne vpon your head, but only he that gaue it you. Princes cannot better ſhew their greatneſſe, then by liking clemencie. Sir, I would not call my ſelfe into extremities, but only in beſeeching your Maieſtie to ſaue his life, and to confine him into what place it ſhall pleaſe you. Wicked ambition did draw him vnto theſe, and a vanitie to ſhew himſelfe able to pleaſure all the world. You haue forgiuen many that haue more highly offended. Sir, O ſpare to note vs all with infamie, and to deliuer vs vp for a pray to perpetuall ſhame, which to vs will endure for euer. I tell you once more, that our moſt humble remonſtrances tende to no other end but to demaund pardon and not iuſtice. Why all knowe that hee is guiltie of hauing practiſed againſt the ſtate. Haue regard to his fathers ſeruice, and to his too. Let not your clemency bee wanting on his behalfe, that had but a will to defend you, ſince it hath beene alwayes ready to pardon ſuch as had already committed offences. Theſe are the requeſts of your moſt humble and moſt faithfull ſubiects and ſeruants, which wee hope your Maieſtie accompanied with your ordinarie clemencie will graunt vs.

As le Sieur de la Force made an end, the king caused them all to rise, and answered.

MEssieurs, I have alwayes taken in good part the requests of the friends of S^r. de Biron, not as my predecessours who would never suffer, not only the friends and kinsmen, but denied the fathers, the mothers, and the brethren of such as were guiltie and culpable to speake unto them. The little king Francis would never admit the vote of my Uncle the Prince of Conde to aske his pardon. Concerning the clemencie which you desire I should shew to Mounsieur Biron, it would no way prove mercie but cruelltie. If it onely touched my particular, I would pardon him, as I doe forgive him with all my heart: but therewithall goeth the safetie of my estate, to which I owe much, of my children, and the preservation of my kingdome. I will leave it to the course of justice, and you shall see the judgement that will be given. I will helpe what I may to make good his innocencie. And I promise you to do what I can in the matter, until I understand that he be guiltie of treason: for then the Father may not solicite for the Sonne, nor the Sonne for the father, the wife for the husband, nor the brother for the brother. Doe not make your selves hatefull unto me, in regard of the amitie which you have had to him. Touching the note of infamie which you speake of, there is none that can be taken but by himselfe. The Constable of S. Paule, of whom I am descended, the Duke de Nemours whose heire I am.

am, haue they left lesse honor to their posteritie? The prince of Conde my Vncle had not his head bene cut off the next morning, if king Francis had not died in the meane time: And therefore you that are the limmen of Mons. Biron can thereby take no shame whilest you continue in your fidelitie, as I assure my selfe you will. And I will be so farre from taking your offices and charges frō you, that if there happen any other, I will giue them you. There is S. Angell, whom he would not suffer to come neere him, because he was an honest man. I am more sorie for his fault then you are. But for as much as he hath practised against me his benefactor, that cannot be endured.

To which the *Sr. de la Force* answered,

Yet we haue this aduantage that he attempted nothing against your person.

And the King replied.

Do what you can to make him innocent, and I will doe the like.

A DECREE OF THE COVRT of Parliament giuen against Monſ. Duke *de Biron*, Peere and Marſhall of Fraunce, Gouernor of Burgoingne.

SEeing by the Court of Parliament all the Chambers aſſembled, the proces ciuill and criminall done by the Preſidents and Counſellors hereunto commanded and deputed by the Letters Patents of the 17 and 22. of June, at the requeſt of the Attorney generall of the King, againſt Monſieur Charles de Gontault of Biron, Knight of the order of the King, Duke of Biron, Peere and Marſhall of France, Gouernour of Burgoingne, priſoner in the caſtle of la Baſtill, accuſed of *Crimine læſæ Maieſtatis*, Informations, Interrogatories, Confeſſions, Denegations, confrontations of witneſſes, Letters, Aduice, Inſtructions giuen to the enemie by him acknowledged of all that which the Attorney generall hath produced, a Decree of the 23. of this moneth, by the which it hath been ordained, that in the abſence of the Peeres of Fraunce an appeale ſhould bee proceded further to the Iudgment of the ſaid proces, and the concluſion of the Attorney generall of the King. The accuſed being heard and interrogated in the ſaid Court vpon the matters on him impoſed. All being conſidered hath beene ſaid, that the ſaide Court hath declared and doth declare the ſaid Duke de Biron attainted &

conuicted of the said crime *Læsæ Maiestatis*, for the conspirations by him done against the person of the King, enterprised vpon his estate, aduertisements and treaties with his enemies, being Mathall generall of the Armie of his Maiestie. For the reparation of which crime he hath deprined, and doth deprive him of all honours, state and dignities; and hath condemned, and doth condemne him to be beheaded on a Scaffolde, which for that effect shall be erected in the plaine of la Greve; hath declared, and doth declare all and singular his goods moueable and immouable generally, in what place soeuer they are set and situate, gotten and confiscated to the King; the countrey of Biron deprined forcuer of the name and title of the Dukedome and Lordship, and the same countrey also his other goods immediators held by the King, to come to the dominion of the Crowne.

THE CONSPIRACIE OF the Duke of *Biron* against the King, Queene, and Dolphin of Fraunce, and the Protestants.

The Letters of Lyons, which came from Paris the three and twentieth day of the moneth last past, doe report: that the intent of the plot of ỹ conspiracie was to kill the King, the Queene and

and the Dolphin, and to cause the Prince of Conde to be proclaimed King, so to promote and exalt Biron and other Lords, with two thousand Gentlemen his followers and complices, which had taken armes in hand for the Religion and common wealth, under pretext to ease the common people of so many subsidies and taxes, and to drive the Protestants out of the land: Biron hauing for his chiefe foe M. de Roni a Protestant, who is a great fauorite of his Maiestie, and is brother of this Ambassadour here. And they say that Biron had intelligence two yeares agoe with forraine Princes, who had promised him forty thousand French Crownes yearely in coyne, and to pay besides ten thousand footemen, and to marry him to a wife, whose dowry should bee worth three hundred thousand French Crowns: for in which consideration he on his side should make himself and become Maister of Burgoingne, and endeuour to remoue other places in France, but that Brest should come againe to his first Maister.

That amongst other Lords was taken prisoner Mons. de Sauergoi Maister of the Requests: and they say that he is the same which hath set forth a booke against the marriage of the king. That there were committed to prison twentie persons, as well Gentlemen, officers and seruingmen by reason of the conspiracie: and they know not that any persons of great qualitie are intangled with this matter, but Biron and the Count d'Auuergne

and they thinke that the said Count d'Auuergne shall well enough saue his life, as beeing one of the bloud, and reputed not to bee the wisest. And that Biron bearing ill will against Monsieur de Roni had demaunded of the Duke of Pernone that hee would assist him with his ayde, and hee answered him by a letter that his forces should bee alwayes ready and ioyned with his: and this letter came into the Kings hands, who for to search out the truth, sent for Pernone, and deliuered him his letter into his hands, saying that hee did suspect that he had conspired against his own person. But he acknowledging the Letter to bee his hand, he did construe the same thus, that his meaning was to ioyne his forces with Biron against Monsieur Roni his enemie, and not against the person of his Maiestie: and for to assure his Maiestie thereof hee came to the Court, and had put into the hand of his Maiestie himselfe and his three sonnes. Which answere was verie acceptable to his Maiestie, & put quite out of his mind the bad impression which he had had against him. And his Maiestie hath giuen ouer the gouernement of Burgoingne vnto the Dolfin, and hath put for his Lieutenant Monsieur de Lauandin, and the matter of Biron was committed to the President of Paris, and the great Chancellor: and that the Queene was verie glad that the said conspiracy and treason was disclosed.

A LETTER OF THE DVKE OF BIRON to the King of Fraunce the 20. of Iulie. 1602.

SIr, among the perfections which accompanie the greatnes of God, his mercie appeareth aboue the reſt. This is that which hath reconciled men, & with him opened the gates of heauen to the world. This goodly part which maketh the whole of an excellent vertue, hauing beene communicated to you by this great Monarch, and appointed by the gift of his especiall grace aboue all other kings of the earth, as to the eldeſt ſonne of his Church, and hauing hitherto the diſpoſing of the liues of your enemies, ſeemeth now to withdraw himſelfe from the miſfortune of the Earle Marſhall Biron. Who dare auouch without telling you that it is a fault for a ſubiect which hath offended his Prince, to haue recourſe vnto his clemencie to win his fauour, ſeeing it is a glorie for a creature which hath moued his Creator to craue remiſſion of his offence with groaning: Now (Sir) if euer your Maieſtie, whoſe clemency hath alwaies honoured the victories of his ſhield, deſireth to make famous and memorable his bounty by fauour onely, it is now, that it may appeare in giuing life and libertie to his moſt humble ſeruant, vnto whom birth & fortune haue promiſed a more honorable death then it threatneth. This promiſe of my deſtinie (Sir, who would that my dayes might be ſacrificed in your ſeruice) goeth about shamefully to be broken, vnleſs your mercy withſtand it, and continue not in my pardon the wonders which it hath

done in Fraunce, which shal euerlastingly make famous your gouernment. You shall doe that in the temporall life, which God doth in the eternall life; and in sauing men, as he saueth soules, you shall make your selfe worthy of the loue of the world, & blessings of heauen. I am your seruant (deare Soueraigne) aduanced & brought by to honours, and in warre, by your liberalitie and discrete valour Earle Marshall of the field: you haue made me Marshal of France: you haue made me of a Baron a Duke, and of a meane souldier a Captaine. Your warres and battels haue bene my schooles, and in obeying you as my king, I haue learned to commaund others as my souldiers. Suffer me not to die vpon so shamefull occasion, but let mee liue to die in the middest of your Armies, seruing for an example of a man of warre which fighteth for his Prince, and not of an vnfortunate Gentleman put to death among a people thirsting after the curiositie of wofull spectacles, and impatient to tarie the beholding of the death of guiltie persons. Let my life (O Soueraigne) ende in the same place where I was wont to shed my bloud for your seruice, and suffer him which yet remaineth aliue with two and thirtie wounds, which hee hath receiued in your seruice, in imitating your valour, spende my life for the conseruation and increase of your Empire. Let me die so honourably (Sir) and that by this famous death men may acknowledge the fauour which you haue done mee in taking away my life. The most sworne enemies of your kingdome haue tasted the lowenesse of your clemencie: and euermore,

after

after the example of God, you haue not delighted in the destruction of anie man. At this time (deare Soueraigne) the Marshal Biron craueth the same fauour, and doth coniure your compassion to shew it selfe as powerfull heerein, as my misfortune hath beene great to haue taken from you the remembrance of my fault: to the ende that you may call to mind my seruice, and that of my deceased father, whose ashes doe adiure you to pardon his sonne, and to rest moued at his request. But if the enemies of my libertie winning your fauour, giue out euill informations of my loyaltie, and you should thinke I would bee suspicious in your kingdome, banish mee from your Court, and send mee an exile a farre off, and take from mee the honour to bee able to serue the particular of your kingdom, I am able at the least to doe some seruice for the generall of Christendome to renew a strange fortune vppon the ruines of those I had in Fraunce, whereof your Maiestie should haue the chiefe disposing, aswell as of mine owne person. For into what place soeuer you should send mee, I should bee, and shewe my selfe a Frenchman: and the repentance of my offence woulde make mee affect the welfare of my Countrey, and I should not curse the honour wherein you bereaued mee of honours and charge. For hauing instead of a Marshal the sword of a soldier, which I bare in the beginning of my entrance into your armies, I shuld bee profitable in the seruice of the Church, & practise a far off frō France that which I haue learned at home of your Maiesty.

But

But if she should forbid me, and should bind my hands wholy (cõ war, giue me (good Sir) my house for a prison, and leaue me nothing but my loyalty for a guard, and that which will serue to maintaine a meane Gentleman at his owne chamber. I will pawne the interest which I looke to haue in heauen, not to goe forth into any place of the world, but whither your Maiesty shall command me. Be touched (dear Liege) with my groanings, & turne from your kingdome the prodigious spectacle of fortune, that a Marshal of Fraunce should serue for a wofull sight vnto the French nation: and that her king, who was wont to beholde him fight among the daungers of war, should promise during the tranquilitie of his estate, that any mã should ignominiously take from him both honour and life. Dread Soueraigne do it, & consider not so much what may ensue vpon this pardon, as the glory to haue knowne and desired to haue forgiuen an offence. For it is impossible that this accident should commonlie happen, for as much as there is none of your subiects that could bee seduced as I haue beene, by the vnhappie cunning of those which rather desired my destruction thẽ my greatnesse, & who making vse of my ambition to corrupt my fidelitie, haue brought mee into the danger wherein I am found. Behold this letter (Sir) with the same eye which God is woont to behold the teares of repentant sinners. Ouercome your iust anger, to bring this victory vnto the fauour which I request at your hands.

Your most humble and obedient subiect and seruant.

Duke of Biron.

A LETTER SENT TO MONSIEVR du Vicq Gouernour of Calais.

SIr, at length the Duke de Biron hath been condemned to be put to death by the Decree of my Court of Parliament, but hauing towards him my accustomed clemencie, as much as the faitie of my Realme and the greatneſſe of his crime hath permitted mee, I haue (to diminiſh somewhat of his innocencie) cõmanded that the ſaid Decree ſhould be executed within the caſtle of la Baſtill in my Citie of Paris where he was priſoner. So that this day he hath beene beheaded in the preſence of thoſe which my ſaid court of Parliament hath there ordained for the ſame effect, and not in the place of Greve, as it is ſet downe by the ſaid Decree: whereof I ſende you a copie, to the end that you ſhould make it knowne to thoſe my good ſubiects which you ſhall find to be faithfull. I am ſorie that the ſaid Duke hath ſo forgotten himſelfe to haue deſerued the puniſhment, but I did owe this example to the communaltie & the ſafety of my perſon, and conſeruation of this eſtate and of my poſteritie: And ſo pray God to take you to his holy protection.

Written from S. Germain in Laye.

Subſcribed HENRY.

And a little vnder POTIER.

A LETTER CONTAINING a Diſcourſe of the Proceſſe and *Execution of Marſhall* Biron.

SIr, the great fauours I haue receiued from you, will not ſuffer me to let ſlip this opportunitie without teſtifying the deſire I haue to doe you ſeruice, attending better meanes to ſhew my thankfulneſſe. You ſhall vnderſtande that the Chancellour of France, aſſiſted with the principall Counſellers of eſtate, and Maiſter of Requeſts, did meete at diuers times with the Counſellers of the Court of Parliament to proceede in triall of Marſhall Biron, and namely vpon Friday the 16. of July, as they were aſſembled together, that ſoulders about eight of the cloche in the morning did fallen a Placard vppon the great gate of the Pallace, containing in ſubſtance, that there was nothing obiected againſt Marſhall

ſhall Biron but calumnies and forgeries, and that the Court of Parliament ought well to conſider how they proceeded in iudgement againſt him, and ſo ended with much praiſe and commendation of the man. He was carried to the Lords by the Captaine of the watch, who immediatly vpon the receipt thereof did riſe for that time. And the next morning being Saterday, the 17. of July, they met again to proceed in trial of the marſhall, being brought to the place by Monſ. de Mountigney. In the beginning he was ſet at the bar, but becauſe the Chancellor could not heare him, he was brought within the raiſes neere the Bench, and had a ſtoole giuen him. There hee made a long and particular rehearſall of the ſeruices done by his father and himſelfe: praying the Lordes to put a difference betweene him and Lafin, whom he charged as the onely man that brought him into theſe matters, yea, that had bewitched him in it, and that euerie man knewe him to bee the moſt wicked man vppon the earth.

The Chancellor perceiuing he would confeſſe nothing, tolde him that Iuſtice had meanes to make ſuch ſpeak as ſhewed themſelues too obſtinate. To which he anſwered, that Iuſtice was no Iuſtice, when it would draw from men by force thinges that they knew not.

The ſame day the king went to the Tuilleries, and preſſed hard to haue the matter

groue

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shall Biron but calumnies and forgeries, and that the Court of Parliament ought well to consider how they proceeded in iudgement against him, and so ended with much praise and commendation of the man. It was carried to the Lodge by the Captaine of the watch, who immediatly upon the receipt thereof did rise for that time. And the next morning being Saterday, the 17. of July, they met again to proceed in trial of the marshall, being brought to the place by Monſ. de Mountigney. In the beginning he was set at the bar, but because the Chancellor could not heare him, he was brought within the railes nearer the Bench, and had a stole giuen him. There hee made a long and particular rehearsall of the services done by his father and himselfe: praying the Lordes to put a difference betweene him and Lafin, whom he charged as the onely man that brought him into these matters, yea, that had bewitched him in it, and that euerie man knewe him to bee the most wicked man vpon the earth.

The Chancellor perceiuing he would confesse nothing, tolde him that Iustice had meanes to make such speak as shewed themselues too obstinate. To which he answered, that Iustice was no Iustice, when it would draw confession from men by force thinges that they knew not.

The same day the king was at the Tuilleries, and pressed hard to haue the matter

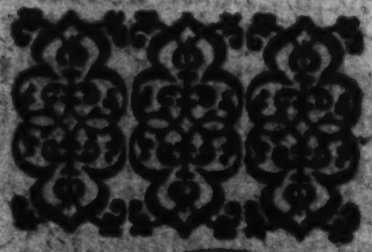
grotto to an end: Which had beene done at that time, but for Monsieur de Fleury, who refused to deliuer his opinion as then, excusing himselfe, because the houre was past. Whereupon he was sent backe againe by water to the Bastill. The same morning there was also fastned a placard vpon the pallace gate, which said, that to day shall Biron be executed to gratifie Rosny, through whose sole testimonie & witnes of the most wicked traitor in the kingdome, a murtherer, a parricide, a sorcerer. Another seditious libell was cast in the Tuilleries. Upon the Monday following the Court assembled by four of the clock in the morning, and brake not vp vntill two in the afternoone: there was not one of the Counsellors of the Court of Parliament, when it came to his course to sentence, that did not make a long preface in the recommendation of his vertues, notwithstanding they all concluded with the sentence of death. Whereupon the Court declared him manifestly attainted in the highest degree of treason, in that he had attempted against the person of the King, and his estate. His answere thereof after he had beene heard, and demaunded concerning diuers matters and articles comprehended in the processe, he was condemned to be brought to the place of execution in the Greue, & there vpon a scaffold to haue his head cut off, & his goods to be confiscated to the King, as to such to whom they appertained. The same morning being Tuesday, it was reported hee should

haue

haue beene executed: but forasmuch as some of his friends had sent to the king, to begge that he might not bee executed publikely, and that the king had referred it to the Court of Parliament, it was stayed vntil the Court was assembled againe. Where it was decreed, that notwithstanding the sentence giuen the day before, hee should receiue the grace to bee executed in the Bastill. And immediately the Chancellour and chiefe Presidents of the Court of Parliament went directly to the Bastill, where as soone as hee perceiued them, hee saide to them that were about him, Yonder commeth my death.

The Chauncellour hauing willed him to deliuer vp the order, meaning the collor of knighthood: He answered, Take it, I would I had neuer seene it. And as the President would haue pronounced the sentence decreed that morning for his priuate execution, hee would in no wise heare him but interrupting him at euerie word, receiued it with verie great impaciencie. And as certaine Churchmen did admonish him to prepare himselfe to death: he said vnto them; Make an end. Do you not see that villaine staying for mee, meaning the Executioner: And as he went vp to the scaffold, he remembred one of his sisters that was with child, enquiring whether shee were deliuered or no: then taking a Diamond from his finger, hee desired that it might bee giuen her. He told of good store of mony which he had here and there, but impeached no bo-

die. And being vpon the scaffold, as the Executioner came neere to make him readie, hee commanded him not to touch him, lest he put him into a furie, for (said hee) I will strangle you all. His countenance was verie furious, and oftentimes he looked about to see if hee could surprize the Executioners sword. Hee couered his face, and discouered it againe twise or thrise: and at the second time hee prayed one of his ghostly fathers to comfort him, for he himselfe could do no more: and as he went about to vncouer his face again, the Executioner strook off his head. His bodie was to be caried to Biron, to be interred, & immediately a poste was dispatched to the King.

And thus ended that tragedy.

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